1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
EH14 Sarakatsani EH14
Zagori

Theodorina, the wife of Theodoros, is criticized because of 578 579
her lack of physical robustness. About three years ago she lost 159
a baby girl. She was prostrate with grief and never fully re- 165
covered. She has been to a number of different doctors who
have agreed that she is suffering from 'weakness' but have
variously diagnosed this as due to infected tonsils, bad heart,
and anaemia. She has had her tonsils and adenoids removed 757
and a number of courses of injections; this treatment has cost a
considerable sum of money and has produced no visible im-
provement. Demetrina, the wife of the second brother, is par-
ticularly scornful of Theodorina. 'Theodorina is down on the
ground (κατὰ γῆς) again', she complains, and goes on to explain
that she is leaving her children in the ditch to fend for them-
selves just because of an idea in her head. This refers to her
grief for her little girl. It is right to grieve, but not to this extent
where she is unable to care properly for her sons and daughters
for whose existence she ought to thank God. No doubt what
really annoys Demetrina and the other women is the money
wasted on medicines, and the extra work which they have to do
when Theodorina periodically says she is too sick to go about
her tasks.

Demetrina, herself, is disliked by all the other wives and her
mother-in-law because of her sharp tongue and her dogmatic
holier-than-thou attitude. Her own family of origin is on the 602
worst of terms with her husband's brothers and she is suspected,
not without reason, of passing on information about the conduct
of affairs in the extended family into which she has married.
She is a storm centre in many quarrels with the other wives on
account of her four-year-old son, an unpleasant and physically
tough blonde-headed bully, who maltreats his young cousins by
hurling stones and hitting them over the head with pieces of
wood. They note that this child resembles his maternal kin.

The third wife, Eleutherina, is a good worker but graceless 596
in body and personality. She suffers from some catarrhal com- 578
plaint which makes her speech almost unintelligible and causes 159
her nostrils to drool with mucus. Behind her back the other 732
wives mock her for these defects and she is conscious of this.
Her small son Alec, who is four years old, suffers from the same
catarrhal complaint, appears to be mentally backward, and is
subject to periodic fits. She is held responsible for the disabilities 558
of the child which affect the prestige of the whole family.

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596 578 159 165 Vasilina the youngest wife has been married for about two years. She gave birth to a son, but the child was weak and died. Since she has scarcely advanced from the status of being a new bride, she does not assert herself. She is a willing worker but slow and without much intelligence. For these reasons the other women have little patience with her and criticize her freely.

596 578 The wives openly admit that they live in anticipation of the day when their husbands will separate the single household and each wife will become 'mistress' (νοικοκυρά) in her own home. Their imputation of various short-comings to the other wives is merely a way of demonstrating their fundamentally opposed interests in respect to their different families. Each wife/mother is in herself a symbol of the kinship distance which separates her children from their paternal cousins, and therefore her husband from his siblings. The worst quarrels between wives are about their children. And such quarrels are particularly dangerous to the unity of the brothers. Two married brothers frequently stand together and verbally or even physically chastise their wives who make trouble in the family by quarrels over personal differences; but when the issue between the wives concerns their children (however trivial its origin may be), the two sibling/fathers, out of loyalty to and identification with their children, are inevitably committed to the support of their wives.

Therefore a circumstantial factor of some importance in deciding the moment when brothers must separate is the increasing difficulty of maintaining discipline in a joint household without causing offence to the constituent elementary families. When Theodoros on occasions shook a worried head and said, 'We are eighteen individuals (νομάτοι) in this house', this was the cause of his anxiety. As head of the house he could directly discipline only his own wife and children. He would not verbally reprimand a brother's wife in her husband's presence, unless she was a newly married bride or without children; in his absence he would certainly scold her if she did not comply with some instruction which concerned the general running of the joint household; but he could not interfere in her relations with her children. No brother would ever strike another brother's wife. 606 Even the control of the mother-in-law over her sons' wives, though it is still considerable, becomes less complete after three or four years of marriage. In this household there are eight young